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**Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women**

## Letter dated 19 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On 10 June 2000, during the final plenary meeting of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", the United States of America dissociated itself from the consensus on three paragraphs of the outcome document that specifically address the topics of globalization and debt relief. In our statement, we said, in part: "These paragraphs characterize globalization and debt as significant obstacles to achieving gender equality. It is our view that national Governments bear the primary responsibility for social and economic development, and for ensuring equality for women in all walks of life. Most aspects of equality for women have no direct link to international economic and financial issues."

On the basis of concern that has been expressed since the conference, it appears, unfortunately, that the last sentence of the above quotation, in particular, may have conveyed the misleading impression that the United States is somehow either not cognizant of, or insensitive to, the potentially negative impact of globalization on vulnerable groups, including women, in developing countries.

Accordingly, I should be most grateful if you would circulate the present letter and the statement transmitted herewith (see annex), which articulates more fully and clearly than our original words the United States view on globalization, as a document of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 110.

(*Signed*) Richard C. Holbrooke

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## Annex to the letter dated 19 July 2000 from the Permanent Representative of the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

## The impact of globalization and its implications for national policy and international cooperation

The United States of America would like to expand upon the statement delivered, on 10 June 2000, at the end of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the five-year review of efforts to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The United States continues to have concerns with respect to much of the language in the Beijing-plus-five outcome document that addresses globalization and debt relief, particularly in paragraphs 29, 30 *ter*, and 135 (i) (formerly 125[i](c)).

Globalization is revolutionizing the way the world works, and can bring tremendous benefits to developing countries — by stimulating trade, by generating employment, and by applying new information technology to education. At the same time, we recognize that not all developing countries have been able to take advantage of the benefits of globalization, and certainly not to the same degree. As some countries race ahead, others face the risk of falling further behind in relative terms.

Within countries, not all groups share equally in the benefits. Owing to historical and existing patterns of discrimination in many countries, some vulnerable groups, including women, have less access to these benefits, or to the proper preparation and training that will enable them to participate fully in the positive aspects of the new economy. Women lag behind men in education, technological training, access to credit, and land ownership. Owing in part to gender biases in institutions, women workers and women in business are often less able to take advantage of economic opportunities, including those enhanced through globalization.

Countries that are falling behind generally suffer from pre-existing weaknesses in policies and institutions, which, among other ill effects, retard the advancement of disadvantaged groups, including women. But the information and communications technology that comes with globalization can also benefit these disadvantaged groups, if they are allowed the freedom to learn, to participate fully in political and social life, and to seize economic opportunity.

Globalization is a fact, not a policy option. It is up to each nation to pursue policies that can help its people take advantage of the opportunities of globalization, so that all citizens, including women, will benefit. Sound national policies are the primary determinant of success in achieving the advancement of women and, indeed, in achieving overall economic and social development.

But developing countries should not face this task alone. The international community should provide encouragement and support, as appropriate, to help them build capacity and undertake the necessary reforms.